

**Adaptation to rapid land-use and climate changes on the Yamal Peninsula,
Russia: Remote sensing and models for analyzing cumulative effects
Grant NNX09AK56G**

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Table of Contents

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 1 | Abstract | 2 |
| 2 | Study objectives and significance..... | 3 |
| 3 | Major accomplishments in 2009-2012..... | 3 |
| 3.1 | Field work in 2009 and 2010: Ostrov Belyy and Krenkel, Eurasia Arctic Transect..... | 3 |
| 3.2 | Fieldwork in 2011 and 2012: Shrub expansion at Kharp, and Vaskiny Dachi Russia | 4 |
| 3.3 | Second and Third Yamal Land-Cover Land-Use Change Workshops, Rovaniemi, 8-10 Mar 2010 and 19-21 May 2012..... | 5 |
| 4 | Summaries of major findings from the each component of the project:..... | 6 |
| 4.1 | Climate change studies (Uma Bhatt, Skip Walker, Martha Reynolds, Jiong Jia, Howie Epstein, Jorge Pinzon, Joey Comiso)..... | 6 |
| 4.2 | Environmental and remote-sensing studies along the Eurasia Arctic Transect (EAT) and the North America Arctic Transect (NAAT)..... | 7 |
| 4.2.1 | Ground measurements of NDVI-LAI-Biomass (Howie Epstein, Skip Walker, G.V. Frost, Marcel Bucchorn, Birgit Heim) | 7 |
| 4.2.2 | Hyperspectral and goniometer studies along the EAT and NAAT (Marcel Buchhorn and Birgit Heim)..... | 9 |
| 4.2.3 | Remote sensing of land use land-cover change (Howie Epstein, Skip Walker, Timo Kumpula, Bruce Forbes, Gerald Frost, Qin Yu, Hilmar Maier) | 10 |
| 4.3 | Modeling tundra vegetation change (Howie Epstein, Jed Kaplan, Qin Yu,)..... | 13 |
| 4.4 | Cumulative effects of resource development and climate change..... | 15 |
| 4.4.1 | Yamal cumulative effects studies (Bruce Forbes, Timo Kupula, Florian Stammer) . | 15 |
| 4.4.2 | Prudhoe Bay cumulative effects studies (Martha Reynolds, Skip Walker, Gary Kofinas)..... | 16 |
| 5 | Publications (includes publications from the first round of funding)..... | 17 |
| 5.1 | Published papers and book chapters | 17 |
| 5.2 | Talks (without published abstracts): | 22 |
| 5.3 | Posters..... | 28 |
| 6 | References cited..... | 31 |

1 Abstract

This report summarizes four years of research for the NASA-LCLUC project entitled “Adaptation to rapid land-use and climate changes on the Yamal Peninsula, Russia: Remote sensing and models for analyzing cumulative effects” (NASA Grant No. NNX09AK56G). It includes summaries of field work conducted in the summers of 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 project workshops in Rovaniemi, Finland in March 2010 and May 2012, work completed on the major components of the study, and a list of publications to date. The project was part of an International Polar Year (IPY) initiative called “Greening of the Arctic” (GOA) and the Northern Eurasia Earth Sciences Initiative (NEESPI). Our objective was to address circumpolar changes in Arctic vegetation productivity and the relevance of climate change and resource development to the indigenous Nenets people in northwest Siberia and elsewhere in the Arctic. Over 40 investigators and students were involved in the research from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the University of Virginia, NASA Goddard, the Earth Cryosphere Institute (ECI) in Tyumen and Moscow, Russia, the Arctic Centre (AC) in Rovaniemi, Finland, and the Alfred Wegener Institute, Potsdam, Germany. There were four major sets of observations and findings derived from these projects:

Climate-change studies. Strong correlations between coastal summer sea-ice trends, land-surface-temperatures (LST), and vegetation greenness (using the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index, NDVI) were found for most Arctic regions and the circumpolar Arctic as a whole (Forbes et al. 2009, Walker et al. 2009, Forbes et al. 2010, Bhatt et al. 2010a, Walker et al. 2011a, 2011d, Kumpula et al. 2011, Goetz et al. 2011, Kumpula et al. 2012, Macias-Fauria et al. 2012, Parmentier et al. 2013). Recent studies have found a divergence of temperature and NDVI trends in Eurasia vs. North America (Walker et al. 2012d). Further research is needed to partition the drivers underlying this heterogeneity to further our understanding and modeling of how future changes will play out as the ongoing warming continues (Dutrieux et al. 2012).

Environmental and remote-sensing studies along the Eurasia Arctic Transect (EAT) and the North America Arctic Transect (NAAT). Six expeditions to the Yamal Peninsula and Franz Josef Land (including those from a previous round of NASA LCLUC funding) produced a rich integrated dataset of vegetation, soil, active layer, permafrost temperature, and spectral information from the EAT (Walker et al. 2009, 2011a, Heim et al. 2011, Epstein et al. 2012). Remote-sensing studies examined the regional effects of climate, terrain, permafrost, soil, and disturbances on the EAT land surface (Raynolds et al. 2008, Raynolds and Walker 2009, Raynolds et al. 2011, Epstein et al. 2012, Frost et al. 2013, Buchhorn et al. 2013). The study found strong heterogeneity in productivity changes across the climate gradient related to summer temperatures, reindeer grazing, soil texture. Major differences in the temporal changes were seen in continental areas of the NAAT compared to the more maritime EAT.

Vegetation change modeling. The field observations from the EAT were used to *improve the parameterization of the ArcVeg model* so it is suitable for vegetation-change studies in tundra regions. Specifically, it models changes in the biomass and productivity of different plant functional types using different scenarios of changing summer warmth, soil substrates, and reindeer foraging (Yu et al. 2009, Epstein et al. 2007, Goetz et al. 2011, Yu et al. 2011).

Cumulative effects of resource development and climate change. Several publications examined the relationships of hydrocarbon development to Nenets land-use (Walker et al. 2009, Stammer and Forbes 2007, Forbes and Stammer 2009, Forbes et al. 2010, Kumpula et al. 2011) and the causes and effects of landslides in the region of intensive development near

Bovanenkovo (Leibman et al. 2008, Khomutov et al. 2009). Recent efforts have expanded the investigations on the Yamal to comparative studies of the Prudhoe Bay Oilfield in Alaska (Raynolds et al. 2013, 2012a, Walker et al. 2012b). The project web site has complete results from the previous rounds of funding, including past proposals, publications, posters and talks at conferences and workshops, annual data reports, annual reports to NASA, and list of participants (<http://www.geobotany.uaf.edu/yamal/index>).

2 Study objectives and significance

Our principal goal was to develop a comprehensive hierarchical understanding of the cumulative effects of resource development, climate-change, and traditional land use on the Yamal Peninsula, Russia and elsewhere in the Arctic. To accomplish this we employed a combination of field observations, models of climate/vegetation change and social-ecological analyses.

The Yamal Peninsula in northern Russia has undergone extensive anthropogenic disturbance and transformation of vegetation cover over the past 20 years due to gas and oil development and grazing by the Nenets reindeer herds. It has been identified as a “hot spot” for both Arctic climate change and land-use change. The complex interactions between a rapidly changing climate, expanding resource development, and constantly evolving social, economic and political environments make it clear that more sophisticated models and approaches are needed to help in planning for the future of the Yamal.

We used remote-sensing and modeling to examine how the terrain and anthropogenic factors of reindeer herding and resource development, combined with the climate variations on the Yamal Peninsula, affect the spatial and temporal patterns of vegetation change and how those changes are in turn affecting traditional herding by indigenous people of the region. The tools developed here will also serve to examine similar changes that are occurring elsewhere in the Arctic and help the indigenous people adapt to the impending changes.

3 Major accomplishments in 2009-2012

3.1 Field work in 2009 and 2010: Ostrov Belyy and Krenkel, Eurasia Arctic Transect

One of the goals of the project was to examine the trends in vegetation, soils, permafrost characteristics and surface spectral properties along a complete Arctic transect in Russia. The Eurasia Arctic Transect (EAT, Fig. 1) stretches from Nadym at 65° 19' N to Krenkel Station in Franz Josef Land at 80° 38' and consists of seven study locations in all five of the Arctic bioclimate subzones and the forest-tundra transition. This transect is similar in concept to the North America Arctic Transect (Walker et al. 2008). During the previous round of LCLUC funding we characterized the landscapes at Nadym, Laborovaya, Vaskiny Dachi, and Kharasavey. In July 2009, we visited Ostrov Belyy and Kharp in July 2009 and in August 2010, the Krenkel Hydro-meteorological Station in Franz Josef Land (Fig. 1). Data reports from all four NASA-GOA Russia EAT expeditions in 2008-2010 are available online at <http://www.geobotany.uaf.edu/yamal/reports>.

The 2010 expedition to Hayes Island in the Franz Josef Land Archipelago completed the Eurasia Arctic Transect (EAT) and was one of the high points of the Russian research because so little was known about terrestrial environments. The 2011 Krenkel data report presents the vegetation, remote sensing and environmental data collected in 2010 near Krenkel Station. The studies followed the same basic procedures used at the locations visited in 2007-2009. The data report includes: (1) a general description of the location and study sites with photographs, (2) maps of the study sites, study plots, and transects at each location, (3) tabular summaries of the vegetation, site factors, and soils at each relevé, (4) summaries of the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) and leaf area index (LAI) along each transect, (5) detailed soil descriptions and photos of the large soil pits at each study site, (6) contact information for each of the participants. The expedition also established the farthest north permafrost and active-layer monitoring site. The appendices to the report include:

Appendix A — Names and addresses of the participants in all four expeditions; Appendix B — Plot and soil photographs from all study sites; and Appendix C — List of birds observed at Krenkel Station and along the route of the ship during 28 Jul to 2 Aug. (available at the web site: http://www.geobotany.uaf.edu/library/reports/yamal_2009_dr091212embDRAFTa.pdf).

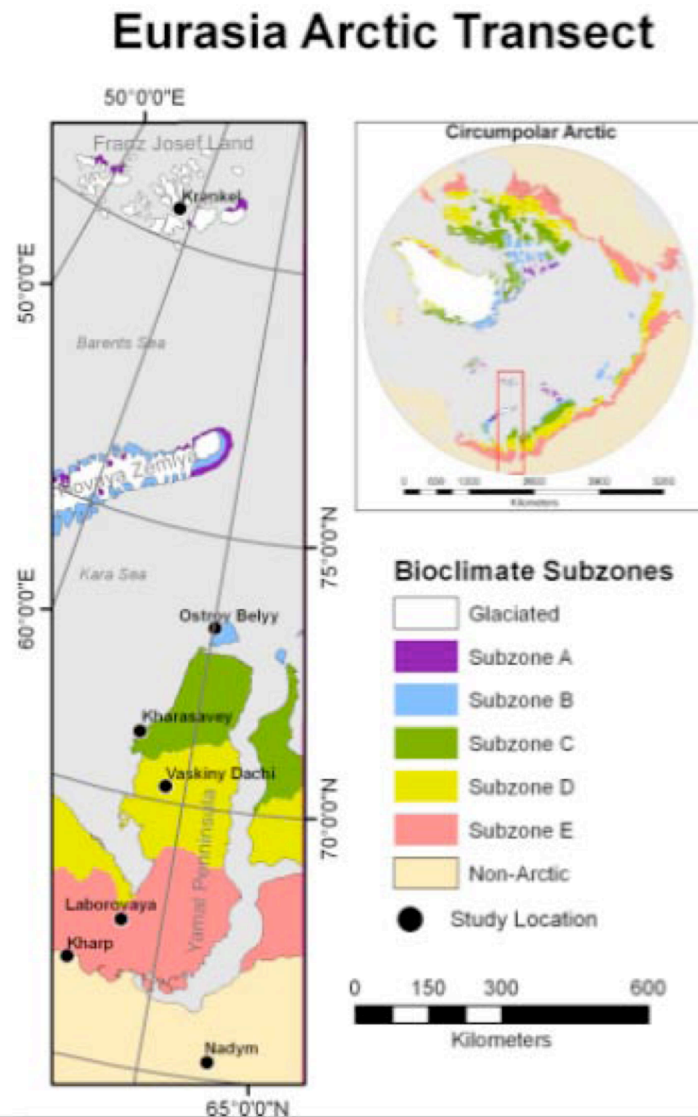


Figure 1. Eurasian Arctic Transect Bioclimate subzones are according to CAVM Team (2003). The seven EAT study locations are also shown.

3.2 Fieldwork in 2011 and 2012: Shrub expansion at Kharp, and Vaskiny Dachi Russia

In 2011 and 2012, fieldwork was focused at Kharp in the foothills of the Polar Urals (Fig. 1). Kharp is the primary study site of G. V. Frost's Ph.D. dissertation research at the University of Virginia to elucidate the relationship of post-1968 shrub expansion to disturbance at the

landscape-scale (fire) and the meter-scale (cryogenic processes). Previous evaluation of 1960s-era Corona satellite imagery indicated that alder shrubland extent has increased markedly at the site in recent decades. This finding was corroborated by pixel-based linear regression of the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), derived from Landsat time-series spanning 1985-2010 that indicate strong increases in plant productivity (“greening”), especially in association with alder shrublands. The field studies were aimed at understanding the causes of the changes. A data report fully describes the site, climate, disturbance history, methods used in sampling the vegetation and soils, and results. Six appendices provide: (1) the list of participants, (2) soils descriptions of the study sites, (3) Plant species cover-abundance in the vegetation study plots, (4) birds observed, (5) soil physical and chemical characteristics, and (6) photos of the Kharp transect, July-August 2011. In 2012, the Kharp site was revisited to retrieve temperature loggers, and place additional loggers. The data report is available at the website: http://www.geobotany.org/library/reports/FrostGV2012_yamal_dr20121030.pdf.

Also in summer 2011, we completed an intensive study of azonal habitats at Vaskiny Dachi in the central Yamal Peninsula. We will examine the shrub vegetation, lichen heathlands, and a wetland to help in the remote sensing interpretations of the peninsula and to examine disturbed habitats.

3.3 Second and Third Yamal Land-Cover Land-Use Change Workshops, Rovaniemi, 8-10 Mar 2010 and 19-21 May 2012.

The Second Yamal Land-Cover Land-Use Change Workshop was attended by 22 participants at the Arctic Centre, Rovaniemi, Finland, 8-10 March 2010. The overall objectives were to (1) review the goals of the project; (2) discuss the progress of each of the individual parts of the project; (3) adjust the goals in light of new discoveries, changing funding situation, and changing personnel; (4) discuss the 2010 and 2011 summer field seasons; (5) plan new publications and research; and take advantage of the special opportunity to meet with collaborators in NASA (Joey Comiso and Jorge Pinzon). A total of 30 presentations were made at the meeting. The papers presented at the meeting are on the project web site: (<http://www.geobotany.uaf.edu/yamal/rovMtg/posters>). <http://www.geobotany.uaf.edu/yamal/rovMtg/agenda>.

The Third Yamal Land-Cover Land-Use Change Workshop was attended by 13 participants at the Arctic Centre, Rovaniemi, Finland, 19-21 May 2012. The dates and location have been chosen to take advantage of the timing of the [12th International Circumpolar Remote Sensing Symposium](#), Levi, Finland, where several members of the project presented papers. The Finland location also allowed several Russian participants to travel to the meeting. The agenda and talks presented at the workshop are at the website: <http://www.geobotany.uaf.edu/yamal/rovMtg2/posters>.

In addition, we have made presentations at several other conferences and workshops including the 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 LCLUC All Scientists meetings (unpublished talks and posters citations 31-43), the Fall AGU meetings in San Francisco (Dec 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012), the State of the Arctic Meeting in Miami (Mar 2010), the IPY Oslo Science Conference (Jun 2010),

the 12th Circumpolar Remote Sensing Symposium, Levi, Finland (May 2012), the 10th International Conference on Permafrost, Salekhard, Russia (Jun 2012), and the Arctic Science Summit Week (April 2013).

4 Summaries of major findings from the each component of the project:

4.1 *Climate change studies (Uma Bhatt, Skip Walker, Martha Raynolds, Jiong Jia, Howie Epstein, Jorge Pinzon, Joey Comiso).*

Until recently, trends in sea ice retreat have generally corresponded with increases in summer warmth and tundra greening in most regions of the Arctic (Bhatt et al. 2010b). However, when the analysis was extended to 1982-2011 there are several notable differences from the earlier period (Figure 2) particularly for land surface temperatures. There is a larger area of cooling over western Eurasia and there is cooling over the southern tundra areas in North America, which had been warming in the earlier period. Open water (sum of weekly open water in % from May-Aug) during summer has increased everywhere in the coastal Arctic with the largest increases in Beringia and Kara-Barents Sea (Figure 2).

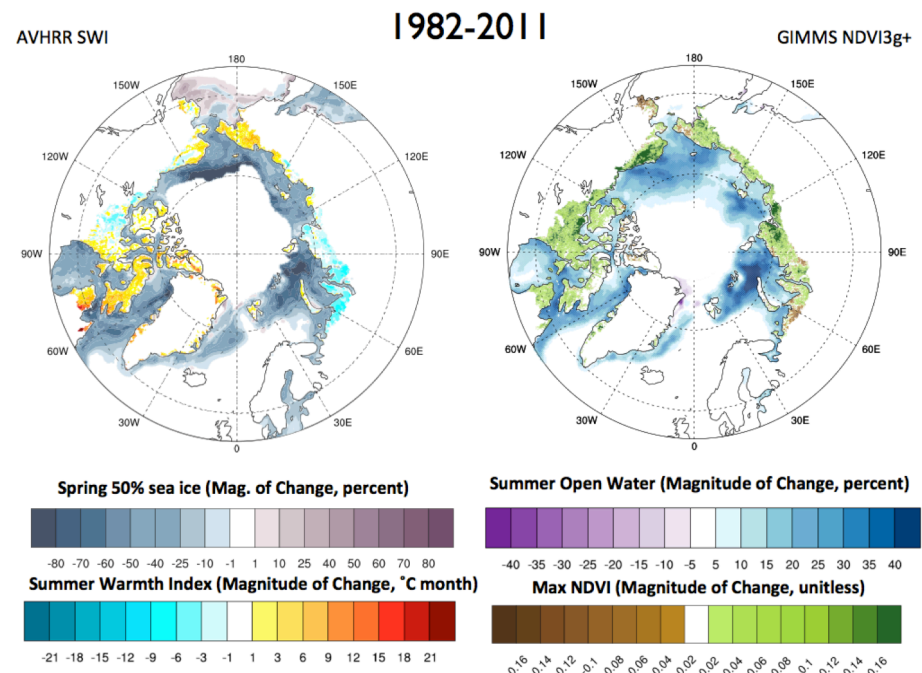


Figure 2. Magnitude of 1982-2011 trends in spring sea ice (left panel), SWI (left panel), summer open water (right panel), and MaxNDVI (AVHRR GIMMS3g+ (right panel). Figure in Walker (2012a) and updated from Bhatt (2010).

The Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) has also generally increased over the Arctic tundra domain from 1982-2011, however there are several areas where NDVI (e.g. SW Alaska, Chutoka, and Coastal West Kara Sea) and SWI (e.g. parts of central Asia between 60-120E) where the NDVI has decreased.

The land warming and MaxNDVI increase is larger over North America than Eurasia (Figures 3-4). SWI has flattened out over the past decade in North America and is actually showing cooling over Eurasia (Figure 4). Coastal sea ice decreases have been larger over Eurasia than North

America (Figure 4) for the full period. Trends are diverging in NDVI between North America and Eurasia after 2001 (Figure 3) (Walker et al. 2012d). Intra-seasonal analysis suggests that midsummer temperatures are cooling and analysis thus far suggests a link to changes in summer convection (Bhatt et al. 2012).

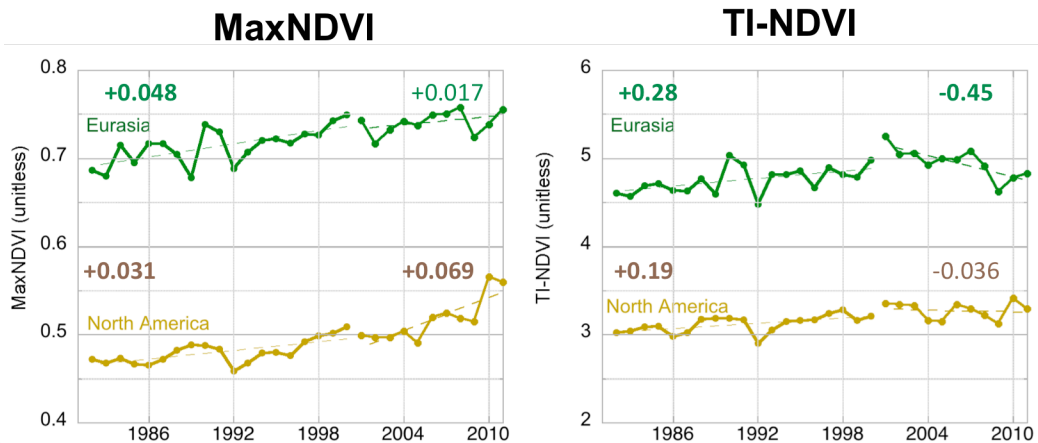


Figure 3. AVHRR GIMSS3g+ MaxNDVI (left) and TI-NDVI (right) during summer from 1982 to 2011 over the full tundra domains. Trends are largest for North America while the mean is larger in Eurasia. The trends are not constant over time and change after 2001. Trend magnitudes are shown above each line segment for the period over which the trend was calculated. Updated from Bhatt et al. (2010) and presented in Bhatt et al. (2012b).

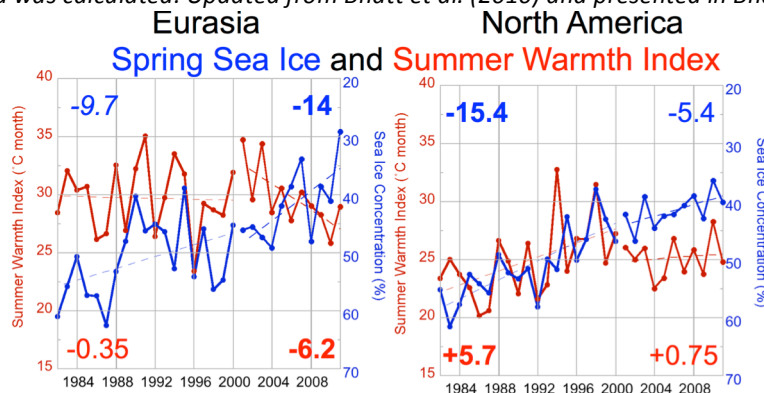


Figure 4. Spring sea ice (blue) and SWI (red) for Eurasia (left) and North America (right) from 1982 to 2011 over the full tundra domains. The trends are not constant over time and change after 2001. Trend magnitudes are shown above each line segment for the period over which the trend was calculated. Updated from Bhatt et al. (2010) and presented in Bhatt et al. (2012b).

4.2 Environmental and remote-sensing studies along the Eurasia Arctic Transect (EAT) and the North America Arctic Transect (NAAT).

4.2.1 Ground measurements of NDVI, LAI, and biomass (Howie Epstein, Skip Walker, G.V. Frost, Marcel Buchhorn, Birgit Heim)

NDVI, LAI, and biomass trends have now been determined for the entire Eurasia transect. We developed a comprehensive, synthetic dataset of field observations for vegetation and soil properties along the full bioclimate gradient in North America and Eurasia. Information from the EAT is in the process of analysis (Walker et al. 2011b) and we anticipate a vegetation

manuscript similar to that published for the North America transect (Walker et al. 2011c).

Among the findings is a remarkably similar relationship between zonal landscape-level aboveground biomass and AVHRR-derived NDVI along both transects (Fig. 5). However, despite the almost identical relationships between biomass and NDVI, the Eurasia transect has distinctly higher hand-held NDVI values for equivalent biomass and LAI (Fig. 6a and b).

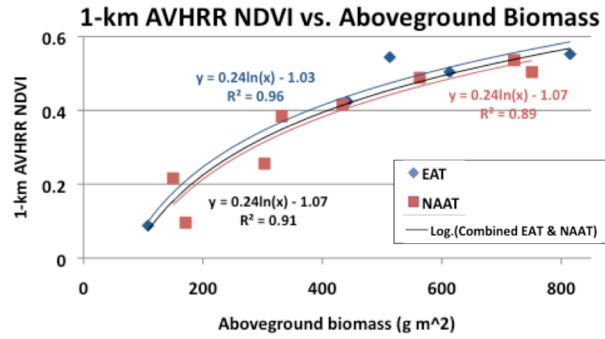


Figure 5. Relationship between AVHRR NDVI and landscape-level zonal aboveground biomass along the North America (NAAT) and Eurasia Arctic (EAT) transects (Raynolds et al. 2012).

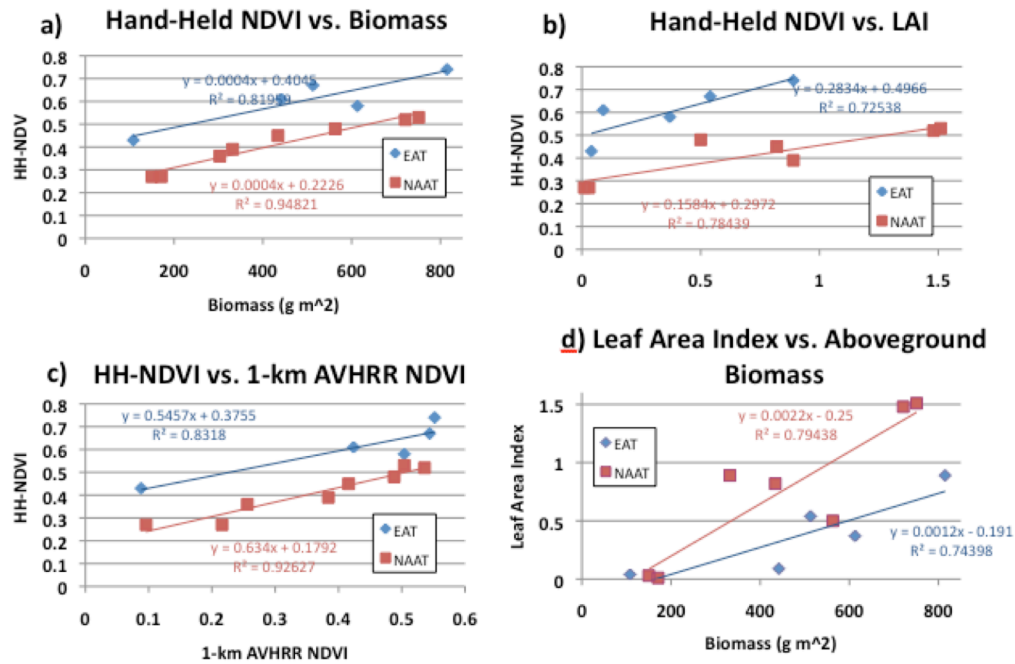


Figure 6. Trends in ground-based measurements of biomass and LAI vs. NDVI along the North America and Eurasia transects. (a) Hand-held (HH) NDVI vs total aboveground biomass. (b) HH NDVI vs. leaf area index. (c) HH NDVI vs. 1-km AVHRR NDVI. (d) Leaf area index vs. biomass. The distinctly different trends for the two transects reflect differences in the plant-canopy structure along the two transects (Epstein et al. 2012).

Similarly, the hand-held NDVI values are higher for equivalent AVHRR NDVI values along the EAT than along the NAAT (Fig. 6c). Most interesting is the diverging trend lines of LAI vs. biomass along the two transects (Fig. 6d), with higher LAI values along the NAAT. The differences in the trend lines are attributed to differences in plant canopy structure caused by a variety of factors including different precipitation regimes, glacial histories, soils and grazing

regimes, which alter the relative proportions of different plant growth forms (Walker et al. 2012a, Epstein et al. 2012, Raynolds et al. 2012b).

4.2.2 Hyperspectral and goniometer studies along the EAT and NAAT (Marcel Buchhorn and Birgit Heim)

Field spectral measurements combined with hyperspectral airborne data, such as those obtained from the AVIRIS spectrometer, or satellite data (such as those from the proposed NASA HypIRI Mission) may allow us to identify tundra vegetation dynamics at the resolution of individual plant communities. Field spectroscopy measurements were made at many of the plots in North America, Canada, and Russia (Jia et al. 2002, 2004, Walker et al. 2012a, Frost et al. 2013, Epstein et al. n.d.). Additionally, in the summer of 2012, broadband and hyperspectral vegetation indices were examined along the main environmental gradients (climate, soil pH, soil moisture) of the EAT at Vaskiny Dachi and of the NAAT at Happy Valley, Sagwon, Franklin Bluffs, and Deadhorse. These were collected in anticipation of the European EnMap mission (Heim et al. 2011, Buchhorn and Schwieder 2012, Buchhorn et al. 2013), and would also be available for the planned NASA ABoVE studies in Alaska (Kasischke et al. 2010). Ground-based hyperspectral characterization of Low Arctic Alaskan tundra communities were obtained along four environmental gradients (regional climate, soil pH, toposequence, and soil moisture) that all vary in ground cover, biomass and dominating plant communities. Spectral metrics were extracted, including the averaged reflectance and absorption-related metrics such as absorption depths and area of continuum removal. The spectral metrics were investigated with respect to 'greenness,' biomass, vegetation height, and soil moisture regimes. The results show that the surface reflectance is similar in shape at all sites with a reduced NIR reflectance that is specific for low-growing biomes. The main spectro-radiometric findings are: i) Southern sites along the climate gradient have taller shrubs and greater overall vegetation biomass, which leads to higher reflectance in the NIR. ii) Vegetation height and surface moisture are two antagonists that balance each other out with respect to the NIR reflectance along the toposequence and soil moisture gradients. iii) Moist acidic tundra (MAT) sites have 'greener' species, more leaf biomass, and green-colored moss species that leads to higher pigment absorption compared to moist non-acidic tundra (MNT) sites. iv) MAT and MNT plant community separation via narrowband NDVI show the potential of hyperspectral remote sensing applications in the tundra.

In collaboration with scientists from the Alfred Wegner Institute in Potsdam, we are also



Figure 7. The ManTIS field portable spectro-goniometer of the AWI. This transportable, field goniometer is the first of its kind and is adapted for use in Arctic field conditions. Picture by M. Buchhorn.

examined how vegetation indices of different vegetation types are affected by changing solar incident angles during the growing season and by different viewing angles of the satellites. This is an especially important topic in the Arctic where the solar incident angles are high and vary strongly through the short growing season. In 2012, we collected *bidirectional reflectance distribution function (BRDF)* data of zonal vegetation at the key NAAT locations at Happy Valley, Franklin Bluffs and Deadhorse with a new portable field gonio-spectrometer (ManTIS BRDF Observatory®, patent pending – DE 102011117713.6) (Fig. 7). These data can be used for BRDF normalization of satellites with a broad imagery-acquisition swaths (e.g. AVHRR, MODIS, MERIS, LANDSAT) or sensors with off-nadir pointing capabilities (e.g. EnMAP, GeoEye).

4.2.3 Remote sensing of land use land-cover change (Howie Epstein, Skip Walker, Timo Kumpula, Bruce Forbes, Gerald Frost, Qin Yu, Hilmar Maier)

4.2.3.1 Bovanenkovo, Yamal Peninsula (Timo Kumpula)

We accomplished several projects related to the remote sensing of land-use land-cover change on the Yamal Peninsula and other regions of Siberia and North America. We used Quickbird, ASTER, SPOT, and Landsat imagery to examine the social and environmental impacts of development at the Bovanenkovo gas field in central Yamal on the tundra and its relation to the Nenets reindeer herders (Kumpula et al. 2012). We are continuing with this effort to use high and very high resolution satellite imagery to examine the effects of development on surface properties of the adjacent tundra, including surface temperatures, albedo, normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) and normalized difference water index (NDWI).

4.2.3.2 Nadym and Kharasevey (Qin Yu)

In addition to conducting further analyses of Bovanenkovo (Kumpula et al. 2011), we have expanded the scope of this effort to include gas extraction sites at Nadym and Kharasavey. We have also begun to use the Landsat Decadal Survey imagery to develop land-cover-change maps for the entire Yamal Peninsula, (Maier and Walker 2010a, 2010b).

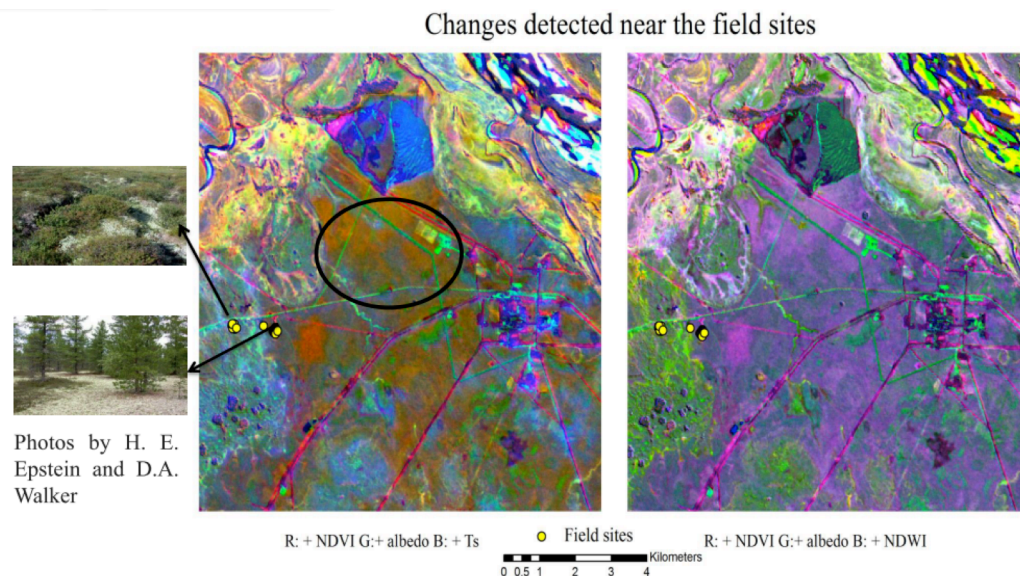


Figure 8. Composite image of difference map based on derived NDVI, albedo, surface temperature and NDWI between year 2007 and 1988.

At Nadym, we derived difference maps of NDVI, albedo, surface temperature, NDVI for years 2007 and 1988 (Fig. 8). Expanded gas facilities and new roads are detected with increased albedo. Vegetation appears to have recovered to some degree along old roads. More detailed vegetation change analysis will be based on the higher resolution image analysis.

4.2.3.3 Shrub growth-ring changes in the Yamal region (Bruce Forbes)

Another part of the land-cover-change analysis examined the correspondence between the growth rings of shrub willows and the summer air temperatures in the vicinity of the Yamal Peninsula (Forbes et al. 2010). Annual ring growth of an abundant and nearly circumpolar erect willow (*Salix lanata* L.) from the coastal zone of the northwest Russian Arctic (Nenets Autonomous Okrug) was correlated with station climate data from numerous sites in northwestern Siberia and Europe. The resulting chronology is strongly related to summer temperature for the period 1942–2005. Remarkably high correlations occur at long distances (1600 km) across the tundra and taiga zones of West Siberia and Eastern Europe. There is a clear relationship with photosynthetic activity for upland vegetation at a regional scale for the period 1981–2005, confirming a parallel greening trend reported for similarly warming North American portions of the tundra biome. The standardized growth curve suggests a significant increase in shrub willow growth over the last six decades. These findings are in line with field and remote sensing studies that have assigned a strong shrub component to the reported greening signal since the early 1980s. Furthermore, the growth trend agrees with qualitative observations by nomadic Nenets reindeer herders of recent increases in willow size in the region. The quality of the chronology as a climate proxy is exceptional. Given its wide geographic distribution and the ready preservation of wood in permafrost, *S. lanata* L. has great potential for extended temperature reconstructions in remote areas across the Arctic.

4.2.3.4 Vegetation change at the forest-tundra ecotone, Kharp and other Russia sites (JJ Frost)

We also examined recent vegetation dynamics in forest-tundra ecotones across the Russian Arctic using imagery from the 1960s-era Corona high-resolution satellite missions (Frost et al. 2012, 2013). Corona images were co-registered with recent images and analyzed for changes in the extent and abundance of trees and tall shrubs. Dramatic changes in vegetation cover were evident at several sites over a ~40 year period, including two sites near the southern Yamal. On the Tazovskiy Peninsula, erosion of sandy marine deposits from shallow hillslopes had exposed clayey soils that are nutrient-rich and support highly-productive shrub vegetation (Fig. 9). The surficial geology and disturbance regime of the Tazovskiy site appears to be similar to that of the Vaskiny Dachi field site on the central Yamal, but Tazovskiy is in bioclimate subzone E and alder is a dominant shrub on landslide-affected slopes.

The other site was in the foothills of the Polar Urals near the town of Kharp. We visited Kharp in summers of 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 and discovered that an old (~100 YBP), high-intensity fire probably initiated the rapid alder shrub advancement in the area. We observed that alders have established most readily on mineral soils that were exposed either by fire, or by cryogenic processes associated with small patterned-ground features (frost boils, non-sorted circles). Cryogenic disturbance is thought to lead to regularly-spaced “shrub savannas” that are common in the Low Arctic, and which up until now have not been fully explained. The

fire/frost-boil/shrub savanna hypothesis is being examined in more detail by Frost as part of his Ph.D. thesis research along the Dalton Highway in Alaska, where there are extensive areas that were burned in 2007-2008, as well as at the Kharp site.

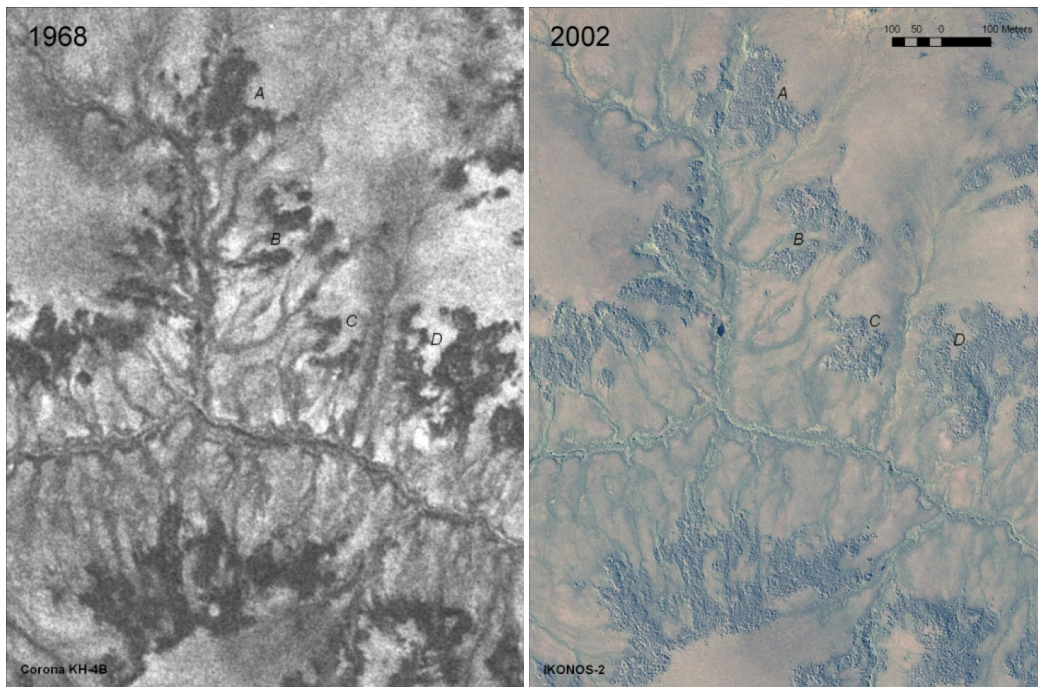


Figure 9. Remote sensing images of the Tazovskiy Peninsula study site, ~60 km east of the southern Yamal. (Left) 1968 Corona image showing extent of alder shrublands on shallow hillslopes (most dark areas in the image). (Right) Co-registered 2002 IKONOS-2 image showing infilling of alders, for examples note the areas in the vicinity of the letters A, B, C, and D.

4.2.3.5 Landsat NDVI change at Toolik Lake, AK (Martha Raynolds)

NDVI calculated from coarse-resolution sensors has shown strong increases since the 1980s on Alaska's North Slope. We used a time series of Landsat data spanning 22 years (1985-2007) to see if the strongly positive change in NDVI observed with AVHRR data in northern Alaska is also observable at the local scale in an 823 km² area near Toolik Lake, AK (Fig. 10) (Raynolds et al. 2013). The rather homogeneous greening documented across northern Alaska at coarser scales (Jia et al. 2003) proved to be very heterogeneous at 30-m pixel resolution, with a strong influence due to glacial history. Small scattered patches of pixels with significant increases in NDVI occurred throughout the younger, late-Pleistocene-age glacial deposits. On older, mid-Pleistocene deposits, increases occurred in few, larger patches of mostly erect dwarf-shrub, sedge tussock tundra, possibly a result of release of nutrients from thawing of ice-rich permafrost. Only 5 % of pixels had significant linear increases in NDVI from 1985-2007 ($n = 6$, $p < 0.05$), while 0.4% showed significant decreases, in small patches whose causes were evident when sampled on the ground. Trends in NDVI varied by glacial history, elevation, slope, and the resulting vegetation conditions. This heterogeneity in response to climate change can be

expected throughout much of the Arctic, where complex glacial histories determine existing soil and vegetation characteristics.

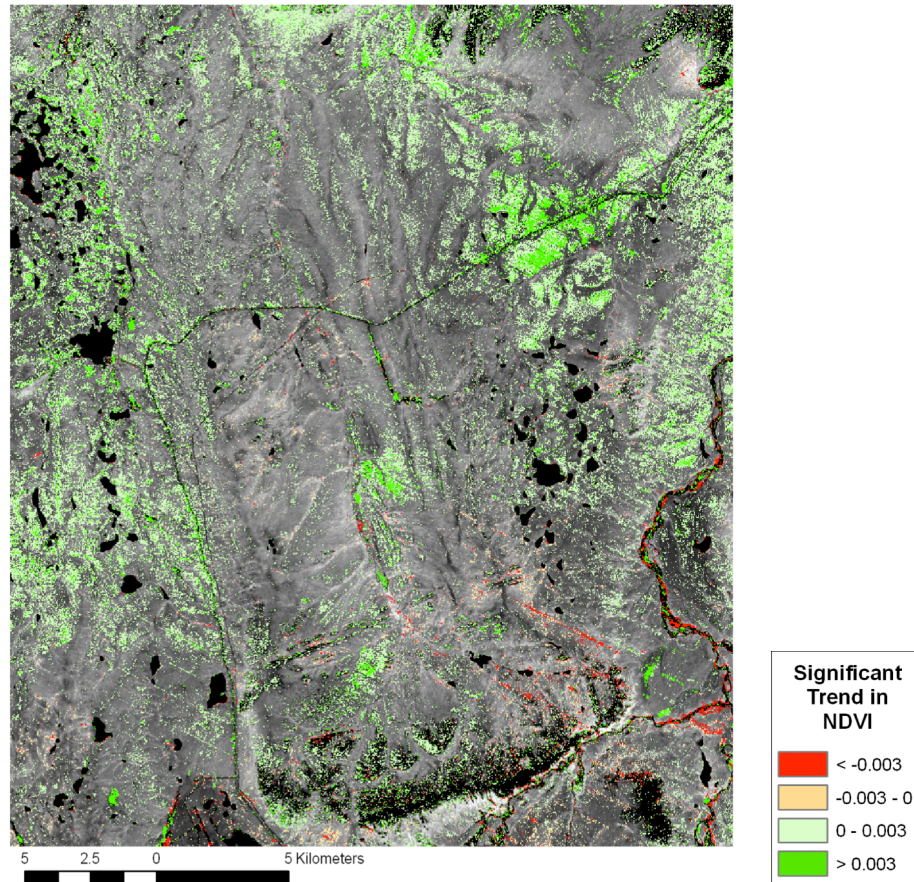


Figure 10. Areas of significant NDVI change within the Toolik Lake Field Station region, AK (1985-2007). Most of the change has occurred on younger glacial surfaces, and in areas of disturbance, including areas with massive ground ice. (Raynolds et al. 2013).

4.3 Modeling tundra vegetation change (Howie Epstein, Jed Kaplan, Qin Yu,)

We used the ArcVeg arctic tundra vegetation dynamics model (Epstein et al. 2000) to simulate the combined effects of temperature increases and different grazing regimes on the tundra vegetation biomass, productivity, and species composition. In a recently published paper, we simulated seven sites on the Yamal Peninsula that differ in their soil organic nitrogen (SON) quantities and that are found across three different bioclimate subzones (Fig. 11) (Yu et al. 2009). A 2°C increase in temperature led to aboveground biomass increases ranging from ~150 g m⁻² to 665 g m⁻² depending on the subzonal climate and the SON. Increased grazing frequency from every 10 years to every 2 years, reduced the effects of climate change on tundra vegetation, yielding aboveground biomass increases ranging from ~100 g m⁻² to ~370 g m⁻².

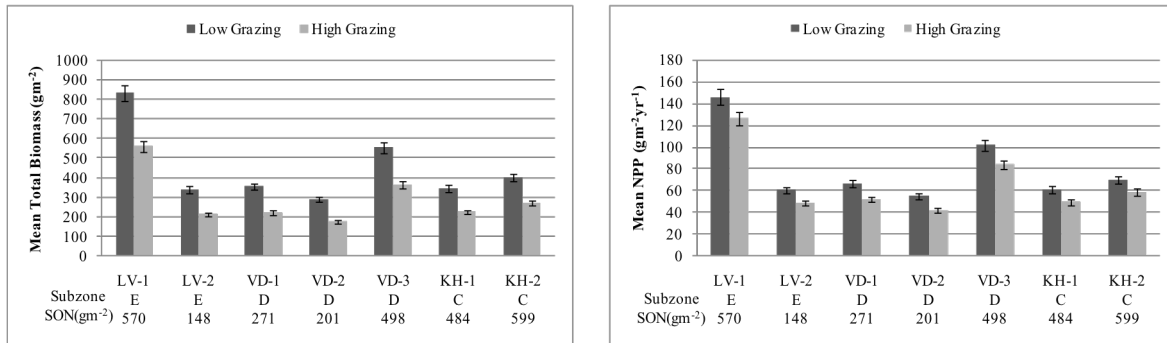


Fig. 11. Comparison of tundra biomass and net primary production (NPP) to low and high grazing regimes in three tundra subzones and different levels of soil organic nitrogen (SON). LV-1 = subzone E, loamy soil; LV-2 = subzone E, sandy soil; VD-1 = subzone D, loamy soil; VD-2, subzone D, mixed loamy and sandy soil; VD-3, subzone D, sandy soil; KH-1, subzone C, loamy soil; KH-2, subzone C, mixed loamy and sandy soil.

We have more recently used the ArcVeg model to examine in more detail the plant functional type (PFT) compositional changes in response to warming and altered grazing regimes on the Yamal Peninsula. We modified the ArcVeg model so that it was parameterized with available reindeer diet data, and grazing in the model is now a function of both foliar nitrogen concentration and plant type preferences.

We simulated 11 sites on the Yamal Peninsula (subzones C-E), Belyy Ostrov (subzone B) and Hayes Island (subzone A) across a variety of SON quantities. A total of 132 simulation runs (variations of the 11 sites, three warming scenarios, and four grazing regimes) were analyzed using non-metric multi-scaling (NMS) ordination, and the results indicated that grazing can be as important as latitudinal climate gradient for controlling tundra community structure (Fig. 12).

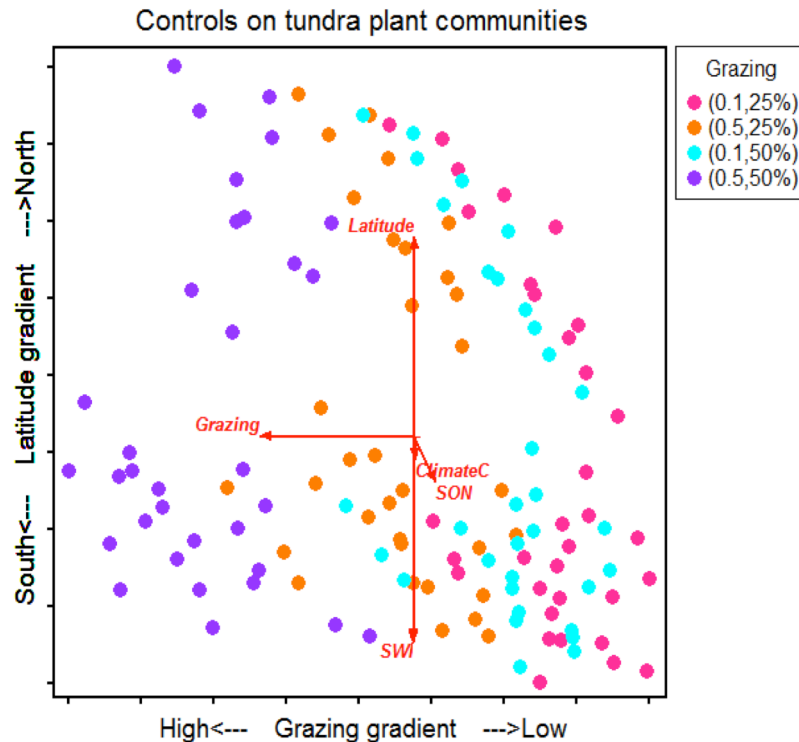


Figure 12. Non-metric Multidimensional Scaling (NMS) ordination of effects of different grazing frequency and intensity (in parentheses in legend) along the Arctic climate gradient.

Most PFTs responded to a 2°C increase in temperature with increased biomass with a few exceptions: rushes in the High Arctic (-2%), non-vascular plants (-5%) and dwarf prostrate shrubs (-20~-10%) in the Low Arctic. (Increasing grazing frequency from every 10 years to every 2 years had a greater impact on PFT biomass than changing the annual percentage eaten from 25% to 50%, and most PFT biomass declined in response to increasing grazing intensities except for evergreen shrubs and mosses (Yu et al. 2011).

In addition to work specific to the Yamal, we are also in the process of conducting circumpolar simulations of tundra vegetation change, using circumpolar maps of tundra subzones, soils, grazing herds, and general circulation model (GCM) output. Jed Kaplan has recently developed a module for his BIOME4 model that simulates the temporal dynamics of soil temperatures and the active layer, which we hope to link with ArcVeg (Kaplan et al. 2010). Finally, we have begun the process of developing a daily version of the ArcVeg model to simulate the effects of changing seasonality on tundra vegetation and carbon cycling. The daily version will include a daily weather generator for climates in all five subzones of both North America and Eurasia, a daily module for the mineralization of nitrogen and the growth of competing plants, empirical equations for the starts and ends of growing seasons, and seasonality of plant functional type activity as well as grazer activity.

4.4 Cumulative effects of resource development and climate change.

4.4.1 Yamal cumulative effects studies (Bruce Forbes, Timo Kupula, Florian Stammer)

The largest land-use changes on the Yamal are related to expanding oil and gas development and changing reindeer-herding practices (Forbes et al. 2009). The Yamal region has 200 identified natural gas fields containing an estimated 58 trillion m³ of gas reserves and is poised for widespread development of industrial infrastructure and concomitant growth of urban centers and human population (Gubarkov 2010, Kumpula et al. 2012). So far, most industrial infrastructure is concentrated in a 450-km² area of the super-giant Bovanenkovo gas field on the central Yamal. Development of other gas fields is now accelerating following the completion in 2011 of a railway linking Bovanenkovo to the rest of Russia (Gubarkov 2010, Kumpula et al. 2012). Amidst the backdrop of rapid industrial development, changing climate and altered ecosystems, about 6,000 indigenous Nenets people and their 310,000 domestic reindeer migrate annually across the Yamal (Stammer 2005). The seasonal movements of the Nenets and their reindeer are directly impacted by the spread of pipelines, roads, and other infrastructure, and the rapidly expanding herds have their own effects on the landscape through extensive grazing and trampling (Forbes et al. 2009, Kumpula et al. 2012). Thus, the Nenets' ability to sustain their traditional land-use practices is challenged by complex socio economic and environmental factors and uncertainties about future climate change, industrial development, and regional population growth.

The Yamal peninsula encompasses a tightly integrated arctic social-ecological system (SESs) (Forbes et al. 2009). In contrast to northern Alaska and Canada, most terrestrial and aquatic components of West Siberian oil and gas fields are seasonally exploited by migratory herders,

hunters, fishers, and domesticated reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus* L.). Despite anthropogenic fragmentation and transformation of a large proportion of the environment, recent socioeconomic upheaval, and pronounced climate warming, the team found the Yamal Nenets SES highly resilient according to a few key measures. The system has successfully reorganized to a remarkable extent to recent shocks. However, expansion of infrastructure, concomitant terrestrial and freshwater ecosystem degradation, climate change, and a massive influx of workers underway present a looming threat to future resilience.

4.4.2 Prudhoe Bay cumulative effects studies (Martha Reynolds, Skip Walker, Gary Kofinas)

New industrial developments are expected to proliferate as Arctic sea ice melts and natural resources become more accessible. Most of the existing and future developments will be in areas of ice-rich permafrost that pose significant hazards to these developments. We recently began a study of the cumulative effects of development and climate change in the ice-rich permafrost landscapes in northern Alaska. We documented 62 years (1949-2011) of change in the Prudhoe Bay Oilfield (PBO) region, the oldest and most extensive major industrial complex in the Arctic (Walker et al. 2012c, Reynolds et al. 2013, 2012a). We mapped the historical changes in infrastructure for all the North Slope oilfields for 10 dates from the initial oil discovery in 1968 to 2011. We also mapped at finer scale the baseline geocological conditions prior to development, historical anthropogenic changes, and natural changes within three 22-km² intensively developed portions of the PBO. The industrial footprint grew rapidly during the early years after discovery and leveled off after 20 years, covering 74 km² by 2011, whereas, indirect effects continued to expand after the main construction phase ended (Fig. 13a). By 2010, over 40% of the intensively mapped area was affected by oil development. Between 1990 and 2001, coincident with strong atmospheric warming during the 1990s, 17.7% of the natural landscapes developed new thermokarst features and more rapid lake-shore erosion resulting from thawing of ice-wedges (Fig. 13b). The increased landscape heterogeneity with abundant small ponds and greater microrelief may foretell a transition to new permafrost and hydrology states and have major implications for construction costs, carbon budgets, tundra organisms and ecosystem services. Documenting the changes associated with development can inform adaptive management approaches to minimize the impacts of future activities.

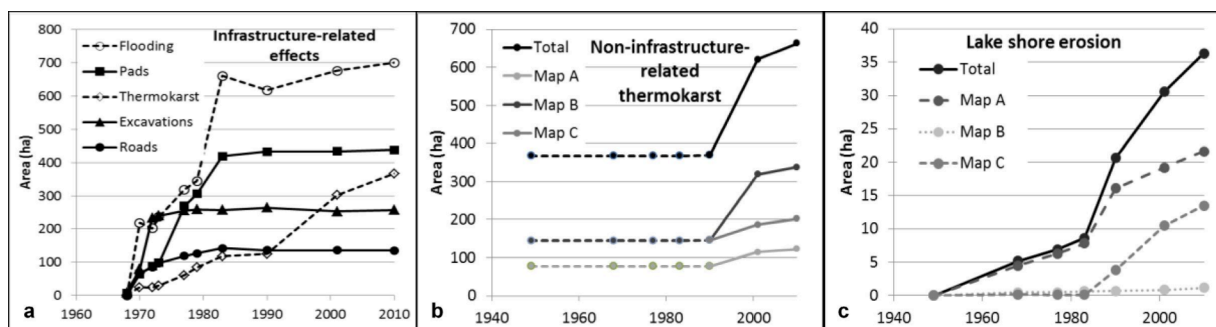


Figure 12. History of changes (1949-2010) in three 22-km² mapped areas within Prudhoe Bay Oilfield, North Slope, Alaska: **a.** History of infrastructure-related effects – direct effects (solid lines) and indirect effects (dashed lines); **b.** history of four common non-infrastructure-related changes; **c.** history of lake-shore erosion for Maps A, B and C and for the total mapped area (66 km²). Both infrastructure-related and non-infrastructure-related thermokarst and lake shore erosion show major transitions starting in 1990 toward greater levels of erosion and permafrost degradation that correspond with a series of unusually warm summers. (From Reynolds et al. 2013, submitted.)

5 Publications (includes publications from the first round of funding)

5.1 Published papers and book chapters

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- Epstein, H.E., Yu, Q., Frost, G.V., Raynolds, M.K., Walker, D.A., Bhatt, U.S., Tucker, C.J., Pinzon, J.E. 2012. Climate and grazing influences on circumpolar dynamics of arctic tundra vegetation. *12th International Circumpolar Remote Sensing Symposium. Levi, Finland May 14-18*. [PDF](#)
- Ermokhina, K. 2012. Phytoindication of Landslide Disturbances in the Central Yamal. *Third Yamal Land-Cover Land-Use Change Workshop. Rovaniemi, Finland May 19-20*. [PDF](#)
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- Khumotov, A. 2012. Mapping of Active Layer Depths Using Correlation between Active Layer Depth and Vegetation Parameters on Central Yamal, Russia. *From Knowledge to Action, 2012 IPY Conference. Montreal, Quebec May 22-27*. [PDF](#)
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